

American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation
(ACVSMR) Policies and Procedures

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Article I: Finances

Section 1: Finance Policy

- (a) **College Organization.** The principal office of the College is in the state of Colorado, unless otherwise designated by the College's governing body, known as the Board of Directors (the "Board").
- (b) **Accounting Method.** It is the policy of the College to use the modified accrual basis of accounting that recognizes revenues when received and expenses when paid. Recognition of revenues when received and expenses when paid is the cash basis of accounting.
- (c) **Chart of Accounts.** It is the policy of the College to maintain a chart of accounts. The College currently has one master checking account. The College is a non-profit 501(c)(6) organization and has applied for and received a federal tax employer identification (EIN) number as a not-for profit organization.
- (d) **Check Disbursements.** All check disbursements will require the Board approval, official invoices, or a completed Check Request Form.
- (e) **Check Signers.** It is the policy of the College to give check signing authority to the President, Treasurer, and the Executive Director, when applicable.
- (f) **Contract Signing Authority.** It is the policy of the College to grant authority to sign contracts to the President, Treasurer, and the Executive Director of the College, as long as the financial implications of the contract are included in the College's budget.
- (g) **Certified Public Accountant.** It is the policy of the College to contract with a certified public accountant firm to annually audit the College's finances. It is the policy of the College to distribute the audited financial statements to the Board for review and approval.
- (h) **Credit Cards.** It is the policy of the College to issue credit cards to the President, Treasurer, and the Executive Director, when applicable.
- (i) **Financial Statement Preparation and Distribution.** It is the policy that the Treasurer of the College will prepare and distribute financial statements to the Board quarterly or on demand. This will include the Statement of Financial Position and the Income Expense Statement.

Section 2: Cash Reserves Policy

The College's goal is to maintain in reserves an amount of cash that is equal to not less than a one (1) year operating budget. The reserve will be held in federally insured bank accounts, either savings or checking, and will be available for emergency use only. In the event an expenditure will reduce the reserves below a specified minimum, approval by the Board is required.

Section 3: Investment and Tax Policies

The decision to invest cash in approved investments must be made by the Board. Investment in common stock and other securities not fully insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) is prohibited.

- (a) **IRS Forms: Form 1099.** It is the policy of the College to complete IRS Form 1099 for all individuals and vendors receiving \$600.00 or more from the College. This is not necessary for reimbursement of expenses incurred by members that are related to duties and responsibilities of their elected positions on the Board or associated committees.
- (b) **IRS Forms: Form 990.** It is the policy of the College to complete IRS Form 990: Return of Organization Exempt Form Income Tax on an annual basis to report the financial activities of the College for the year.

Article II: Fees

Section 1: Payment of Fees

- (a) Applicants shall pay prescribed fees to the College for application submissions, credentials processing and board-certification examinations. These fees are nonrefundable and payable each time credentials are resubmitted or when registering for portions or the entirety of the board-certification examination. Fees will be determined by the Board.
- (b) Annual membership fees for active diplomates are due and payable on the first (1st) day of January of each year. Annual membership fees that are not paid by the first (1st) day of April of each year will increase incrementally as a punitive measure for non-payment, which will be defined by the Board. Diplomates who do not remain current on payment of their annual membership fees will be considered inactive and will have their membership changed to an inactive diplomate status if their annual membership fees that are not paid by the first (1st) day of June of each year. Active diplomate status can be resumed by paying the current annual membership fees and a reactivation fee.

Inactive members lose the following benefits: the right to vote, hold office, serve as a Program Director, and attend business meetings of the College; listing as an active diplomate in the College directory and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) directory; and other privileges deemed appropriate by the Board.

Section 2: Establishing and Amending Dues and Fees

The Board has the authority to establish all fees associated with board certification, including but not limited to, annual membership fees, credentials submission fees, examination fees, and maintenance of certification fees.

Before established or amended fees can be implemented, the Board must provide the membership with a minimum of 30 days' notice of said change.

Article III: Mailing List Sales and Distribution

It is the policy of the College not to sell or distribute mailing lists of the College membership, unless the product or service is of direct interest to the diplomates. Mailing lists will be provided upon request to active diplomates of the College pending approval from the Board.

Article IV: Record Retention and Destruction

It is the policy of the College to retain records as required by law and to destroy them when appropriate.

Article V: Executive Director

If an Executive Director is appointed, he or she shall have the authority and duty to implement all policies of the corporation, and the responsibility to report to the Board concerning these affairs. Among other authority, the Executive Director would have the authority to hire and dismiss employees and other personnel of the corporation, including consultants, contractors, counsel, and the like; and legally bind the corporation and sign on its behalf contracts, checks, drafts, notes, mortgages, leases, and other legal documents, without limitation by reason of specification. The Executive Director would perform such other duties as may be designated by the Board.

Article VI: Meeting of Diplomates

Diplomates of the College shall meet annually at such a time, date, and location as designated by the Board. A quorum will be defined as the majority of the number of active diplomates that attend the annual membership meeting. The time, date and location of the annual meeting will be determined and announced at least 30 days in advance of the planned meeting. The general membership will be notified by an e-mail list serve and a notice of the annual meeting will be posted to the College website (www.vsmr.org).

Article VII: Committee Information

Section 1: Appointment of Committee Chairs

The Board will appoint new committee chairs from within the respective committee membership. The outgoing committee chair will be asked for recommendations for a replacement based on past committee service, awareness of committee activities, and collegiality of the selected nominees. The Board and the current committee chair of the individual committees will review the list of submitted nominees, determine eligibility and qualifications, and select a final committee chair at least one (1) month prior to the annual membership meeting. Committee chairs shall be appointed by majority vote of the Board. All new committee chairs will be introduced at the annual membership meeting and begin their term of service at the annual membership meeting with the exception of the Examination Committee Chair who begins their appointment at the time of the annual examination.

Section 2: Appointment of Committee Members

Committee chairs will be responsible for organization of all committee activities and oversight of all committee members, under direction of the Board. Committee chairs will provide a list of open committee membership positions to the Board for annual review and consideration prior to the Annual General Meeting. The Board will then direct the Nominating Committee to seek volunteers (self-nominations) for open committee membership positions from the general membership. All nominees will be required to submit 1) a letter of intent that includes why they are qualified or desire to be a specific committee member and a description of prior service to the College and 2) current curriculum vitae. The Nominating Committee and the active committee chair of the individual committees will review the list of submitted nominees, determine eligibility and qualifications, and select a final list of nominees for committee positions.

Nominations will be solely based on sports medicine and/or rehabilitation qualifications and will not be based on board specialization within other colleges (e.g., ACVS, ACVIM).

Recommendations for qualified committee member candidates shall be submitted to the Board for review and final selection approval at least one (1) month prior to the annual membership meeting. All new committee appointments will be introduced and will begin their term of service

at the annual membership meeting with the exception of the Examination Committee members who take on their appointments at the time of the annual examination.

Section 3: Dismissal of Committee Members, Chairs or Liaisons

Unless otherwise specified herein, a committee member, committee liaison, or committee chair may be removed by the Board without notice, whenever, in its judgment, the best interest of the College shall be served by such removal. Vacancies in the membership of any committee, in any capacity, may be filled by appointments made in the same manner as provided in the case of the original appointments.

Section 4: Public Relations and Marketing Committee

- (a) **Composition.** The Public Relations and Marketing Committee shall consist of two (2) co-chairs representing the two (2) species-specific categories (canine and equine) and include at least three additional (3) members from each of the two (2) species-specific categories for at least eight (8) committee members with expertise or interest in public relations and marketing. New committee co-chairs will be selected from the existing Public Relations and Marketing Committee membership to provide the necessary knowledge and experience to guide the committee activities. All Public Relations and Marketing Committee members must maintain active diplomate status and be in good standing with the College. The Public Relations and Marketing Committee Board liaison will be an ex-officio non-voting member of the Public Relations and Marketing Committee.
- (b) **Terms of Office.** The Public Relations and Marketing Committee members shall serve for a term of four (4) years, which shall be staggered to ensure that two (2) or three (3) members are replaced each year. There is a limit of two (2) consecutive or subsequent terms that an individual may serve on Public Relations and Marketing Committee. The committee co- chairs will serve from the time of their appointment as chair until the end of their term on the committee. The chairs should be staggered such that no more than one co-chair is replaced in a given year.
- (c) **General Authority and Duties.** The Public Relations and Marketing Committee shall be responsible for: developing promotional materials, establishing industry and private collaborations for continuing education or funding opportunities, and marketing the College. Under the direction of the Board, the Public Relations and Marketing Committee shall perform its duties and report its findings to the Board on a monthly basis.
- (d) **Roles and Responsibilities.** Public Relations activities and responsibilities include the following:
 - (i.) Assist with development and maintenance of the College website (vsmr.org)
 - (ii.) Establish and maintain the College presence on other social networking sites
 - (iii.) Develop partnerships with private and corporate companies to aid in the support of the College's activities
 - (iv.) Work in collaboration with the Continuing Education Committee to organize continuing education meetings
 - (v.) Raise funds in support of the College's activities including continuing education and the Education and Research Foundation.

- (e) **Marketing Activities Roles and Responsibilities.** Marketing activities and responsibilities include the following:
- (i.) Develop promotional materials to raise awareness of the College and its activities in cooperation with the Board and Executive Director
 - (ii.) Market the College and its diplomates as specialists in the fields of sports medicine and rehabilitation.
- (f) **Sponsorship Guidelines.**
- (i.) Sponsorship of the College or other elements is open to all groups and or companies with an interest in the advancement of the practice of veterinary sports medicine and rehabilitation through improvements in continuing education, goods, or policies. These groups or companies can include pharmaceutical, nutrition and or feed companies, research or diagnostic laboratories, and other affiliated groups. Groups or companies can sponsor a species-specific program, general scientific sessions, luncheon meetings, diplomate dinners, evening receptions, Board of Director meetings, or entire symposia developed by the College.
 - (ii.) A member of the Public Relations and Marketing Committee will act as the sponsorship liaison. This person should be, and remain, separate from the chair of any educational program.
 - (iii.) Sponsorship for selected programs or species-specific tracts can be solicited by the Public Relations and Marketing Committee or members of the Continuing Education Committee. Sponsorship of the entire symposium, luncheons, receptions, or a diplomate dinner can be solicited at any time.

Section 5: Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee will oversee and supervise the nominating process for new officers, regents, and committee members and shall establish appropriate procedures and rules for the nomination of qualified candidates.

The Nominating Committee will solicit nominees for new officers and regents. The Nominating Committee will review the credentials of candidates. The Nominating Committee will present the qualified candidates for open officer and regent positions for approval by the Board prior to presenting the slate of candidates for election by the College membership.

The Nominating Committee will solicit volunteers (self-nominations) for all open committee positions. The Nominating Committee and the active committee chair(s) of the individual committees will review the list of candidates that have volunteered, determine eligibility and qualifications, and select a final list of committee members. Self-nominations will be solely based on sports medicine or rehabilitation qualifications and will not be based on board specialization within other colleges (e.g., ACVS, ACVIM). Recommendations for qualified committee member candidates shall be submitted to the Board for final approval at least one (1) month prior to the annual membership meeting. All new committee appointments will be introduced at the annual membership meeting.

- (a) **Composition.** The Nominating Committee shall be composed of the Immediate Past President as chair of the committee and at least four (4) members that include two (2)

canine and two (2) equine diplomates. No more than two (2) of the members may be current or past Board members. All Nominating Committee members must maintain active diplomate status and must be in good standing with the College. The committee chair of the Nominating Committee shall be the Immediate Past President or as otherwise determined by the Board. The committee chair shall be a voting member of the committee.

- (b) **Terms of Office.** The Immediate Past President or other person designated by the Board as the committee chair shall serve as chair of the Nominating Committee for a term of one (1) year. Other Nominating Committee members shall serve for a term of four (4) years on staggered terms to ensure that one (1) committee member is replaced each year. There is a limit of two (2) consecutive or subsequent terms that an individual may serve on the Nominating Committee.
- (c) **General Authority and Duties.** The Nominating Committee shall oversee and supervise the process for volunteers (self-nomination) for new committee members. The Committee will establish appropriate procedures and rules for the nomination and volunteer process of qualified candidates. The Committee will solicit nominations for new officers and regents to replace those whose terms expire on an annual basis. The Committee will solicit volunteers (self-nominations) for committee members to replace those whose terms expire on an annual basis. The Committee will review credentials of candidates for all open positions and submit acceptable nominees and volunteers for review by the Board. Under the direction of the Board, the Nominating Committee shall perform its duties and report its findings to the Board on a monthly basis.
- (d) **Nominating Requirements and Procedures.** Elections to the Board shall be as follows: The selection of Vice President and regents will be alternated every year between the species-specific focus (canine and equine) of the candidates in order to provide a balanced interest and guidance for the College.

Nominations for Secretary and Treasurer positions may be made regardless of the candidate's species focus.

The Nominating Committee will ask for nominees for the Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and open regent positions from the general membership. Each candidate must be nominated by two (2) active diplomates in good standing by submitting a letter of recommendation. Self-nominations will not be accepted. All nominees will be required to submit 1) a letter of intent that includes qualifications, description of prior service to the College, and future goals/vision for the College; and 2) a current curriculum vitae. Nominations will be solely based on sports medicine or rehabilitation qualifications and will not be based on board specialization within other colleges (e.g., ACVS, ACVIM).

- (e) **Selection Criteria for the Vice President Nominee.** The Vice President nominee is expected to fulfill all of the following requirements:
 - (i.) Business experience – The Vice President nominees should have a background in business, legal and organizational policies to assist the College in its continued development and growth.
 - (ii.) Leadership experience – Demonstrated skills and experience by holding leadership positions in other veterinary specialties or large veterinary organizations that provide the needed wisdom and experience for successful management of the College

- (iii.) Service record – Nominees should have an established and proven record of service to the College
 - (iv.) Collegiality – Respect and encouragement of individual strengths and fostering and development of collegiality among the membership. Nominees should have a demonstrated ability to build consensus within the College
 - (v.) Respect and trust – Have strong support from colleagues within the field of expertise.
- (f) **Selection Criteria for the Regent Nominee.** The regent nominee is expected to fulfill all of the following requirements:
- (i.) Service record – Nominees should have an established and proven record of service to the College
 - (ii.) Knowledge and experience – Have a strong understanding of their field of interest and the relevant sports medicine and rehabilitation issues in either the canine or equine practice category
 - (iii.) Unbiased judgment – Have the ability to provide strong, but fair representation of the field, regardless of personal views
 - (iv.) Collegiality – Respect and encouragement of individual strengths and fostering and development of collegiality among the membership. Nominees should have a demonstrated ability to build consensus within the College
 - (v.) Respect and trust – Have strong support from colleagues within the field of expertise.

Recommendations for qualified Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and regent candidates shall be submitted to the Chair of the Nominating Committee at least four (4) months prior to the annual membership meeting. The Nominating Committee will review the list of submitted nominees, determine eligibility and qualifications, and submit acceptable nominees for the Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and regent positions to the Board for review and approval at least three (3) months prior to the annual membership meeting. The ballot will specifically identify the diplomates nominated by practice category (canine or equine) for the Vice President and the regent positions.

If the Board does not approve of the nominees sent forward for review, then those names will be sent back to the Nominating Committee for additional review based on the Board's concerns for the applicant qualifications. The Nominating Committee will review the Board's concerns and if necessary, select a replacement nominee, as deemed appropriate by the Nominating Committee. The Board will make the final decision on the ballot of nominees.

The approved ballot of no greater than two (2) nominees for Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and regent candidates will be distributed to the entire College membership by e-mail for voting by active diplomates in good standing for a single Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and regent candidate. The tabulation of results and determination by a simple majority of votes for the Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and regent nominees will be completed prior to the annual membership meeting. The selected Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and regent nominees will begin their term of service at the annual membership meeting as the Immediate Past President and outgoing Secretary, Treasurer, and regents are replaced.

Section 6: Credentialing and Residency Committee

- (a) **Composition.** The Credentialing and Residency Committee shall consist of two (2) co-chairs representing the two (2) species-specific categories (canine and equine) and include four (4) representatives from each of the two (2) species-specific categories for a total of ten (10) committee members. New committee co-chairs will be selected from the existing Credentialing and Residency Committee membership to provide the necessary knowledge and experience to guide the committee activities. All Credentialing and Residency Committee members must maintain active diplomate status and be in good standing with the College. The Credentialing and Residency Committee shall consist of two (2) working subcommittees: one responsible for credentials review and acceptance (Credentialing Subcommittee) and one responsible for residency applications and training requirements (Residency Subcommittee). The Credentialing and Residency Committee Board liaison will be an ex-officio non-voting member of the Credentialing and Residency Committee.
- (b) **Terms of Office.** The Credentialing and Residency Committee members shall serve for a term of four (4) years, which shall be staggered to ensure that two (2) or three (3) members are replaced each year. There is a limit of two (2) consecutive or subsequent terms that an individual may serve on the Credentialing and Residency Committee. The committee co-chairs will serve from the time of their appointment as chair until the end of their term on the committee. The chairs should be staggered such that no more than one co-chair is replaced in a given year.
- (c) **General Authority and Duties.** The Credentialing and Residency Committee shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate residency training requirements; preparing and disseminating information concerning the residency training program; monitoring resident progress during residency training program; and certifying resident completion of the respective residency training program prior to board-certification examination. The Committee is also responsible for establishing criteria and maintaining board certification of diplomates. Under the direction of the Board, the Credentialing and Residency Committee shall perform its duties and report its findings monthly to the Board. Members of the College who made major contributions to the educational preparation of a candidate shall disclose their role in such preparation and shall not have any active role in evaluating and/or credentialing the candidate.

The individual members and duties of the committee will be directed toward credentials and recertification activities (Credentialing Subcommittee) or residency-related activities (Residency Subcommittee) as needed throughout the year, which will be at the discretion of the Credentialing and Residency Committee. The committee chairs shall be members of both working subcommittees. For activities that require a vote, if the subcommittee vote is tied, the vote will be directed to the entire Credentialing and Residency Committee. If the vote is still tied, the Board liaison to the Credentialing and Residency Committee shall cast a vote. Finally, if the vote is still tied, Robert Rules of Order will be followed which states that a tie vote is a no vote.

The Credentialing and Residency Committee ensures that the College only certifies veterinarians who have demonstrated, by meeting established training or experience requirements and by attaining acceptable scores on comprehensive examinations administered by the College, their fitness and ability to practice the specialty. The

prerequisites and experience requirements for taking the examination are based on those of other established Recognized Veterinary Specialty Organizations (RVSOs).

Under the direction of the Board, the Credentialing and Residency Committee shall perform its duties and report its findings to the Board on a monthly basis.

Section 7: Exam Committee

The Examination Committee Section Chairs will review and select new committee members and Section chairs whose names will be presented to the Nominating Committee and subsequently approved by the Board. New committee Section Chairs and Section Chair-elects will be selected from the existing Examination Committee membership by the existing and outgoing committee Section Chairs to provide the necessary knowledge and experience to guide the committee activities. Section Chair-elects will serve one year in training prior to becoming Section Chair. The Examination Committee Chair will be nominated from the current or former Examination Committee Section Chairs to provide the necessary knowledge and experience to guide the committee activities.

The Examination Committee Board liaison will be an ex-officio non-voting member of the Examination Committee. The Examination Committee Chair will serve in an administrative role and interact with the Section Chairs to ensure timely activities and smooth operations of the Examination Committee. The Examination Committee liaison will attend all Examination Committee meetings, conference calls and the annual board-certification examinations and report activities of the Examination Committee to the Board.

- (a) **Composition.** The Examination Committee will consist of at least four (4) members in each of the three (3) core, canine and equine categories, for a total of at least twelve (12) committee members. The Examination Committee members from each species-specific category will also consist of members from each of the two (2) professional practice categories (sports medicine and rehabilitation). Specifically, committee members will represent canine rehabilitation, canine sports medicine, equine rehabilitation, and equine sports medicine. The Examination Committee shall also consist of one (1) Examination Chair and three (3) Section chairs that represent the core knowledge and the two species-specific categories (canine and equine) within the board examinations. All Examination Committee members must maintain active diplomate status and be in good standing with the College. Selection of new Examination Committee members within the three sections (core, canine and equine) will be done in accordance with the committee rules specified in these Policies and Procedures.
- (b) **Terms of Office.** The three (3) committee section chairs should serve in overlapping terms to provide committee continuity and to prevent simultaneous term expirations. Examination Committee members shall serve for a term of four (4) years, which shall be staggered to ensure that the terms of three (3) members expire each year. There is a limit of two (2) consecutive or subsequent terms that an individual may serve on the Examination Committee.
- (c) **General Authority and Duties.** The Examination Committee shall be responsible for: developing and administering to candidates valid and defensible, knowledge-based certification examinations related to each species-specific and professional practice category. Under the direction of the Board, the Examination Committee shall perform its duties and report its findings to the Board on a monthly basis.

- (d) **Roles and Responsibilities.** Public Relations activities and responsibilities include the following:
- (i.) Determine the subject matter to be covered on board-certification examinations based on periodic job analysis surveys of the active diplomates
 - (ii.) Determine the distribution of examination questions within each subject content area based on examination rubrics
 - (iii.) Define examination reading lists and provide candidates with clear guidelines about examination content
 - (iv.) Define the general knowledge base expected across the core, canine and equine examinations
 - (v.) Define the format of the examination questions and test-taking process
 - (vi.) Construct high-quality questions as needed to generate new examination material
 - (vii.) Develop the core knowledge examination to be taken by all candidates for diplomate status
 - (viii.) Develop the species-specific examinations in canine and equine sports medicine and rehabilitation required by all candidates for diplomate status
 - (ix.) Maintain a question bank for the core knowledge and species-specific examinations with the services of a professional examination administrator.

Section 8: Continuing Education Committee

- (a) **Composition.** The Continuing Education Committee shall consist of one (1) chair and one (1) vice-chair representing the two (2) different species-specific categories (canine and equine) and include at least three (3) representatives from each of the two (2) species-specific categories for a total of eight (8) committee members. The new committee vice-chair will be selected from the existing Continuing Education Committee membership to provide the necessary knowledge and experience to help guide the committee activities. The committee vice-chair should preferably have served for 2 years as a Continuing Education Committee member prior to selection and will assume the responsibilities of the chair at the end of the chair's term of service. All Continuing Education Committee members must maintain active diplomate status and be in good standing with the College. The Continuing Education Committee Board liaison will be an ex-officio non-voting member of the Continuing Education Committee.
- (b) **Terms of Office.** The committee chair and vice chair will serve for a term of one (1) year in each position. The chair will oversee all committee activities and the vice-chair will provide specific leadership specific for ACVSMR Symposium planning and execution. Continuing Education Committee members shall serve for a term of four (4) years, which shall be staggered to ensure that one (1) or two (2) members are replaced each year. There is a limit of two (2) consecutive or subsequent terms that an individual may serve on the Continuing Education Committee.
- (c) **General Authority and Duties.** The Continuing Education Committee shall be responsible for organizing educational programs in the areas of sports medicine and rehabilitation and providing educational opportunities for candidates preparing for the certification examinations. Under the direction of the Board, the Continuing Education Committee shall perform its duties and report its findings to the Board on a monthly basis.

- (d) **Roles and Responsibilities.** Continuing Education activities and responsibilities include the following:
- (i.) Organize educational programs and continuing education events in the areas of canine and equine sports medicine and rehabilitation
 - (ii.) Organize educational programs to prepare candidates for the board-certification examinations
 - (iii.) Organize and execute a scientific abstract program where selected abstracts are presented in official annual Continuing Education program(s)
 - (iv.) Work closely with the Public Relations and Marketing Committee for sponsorship of continuing education programs
 - (v.) Work with other organizations on solicitation or request to develop continuing educational programs in sports medicine and rehabilitation
 - (vi.) Submit an annual budget to the Board for the College's Continuing Education programs.

Section 9: Additional Committees

The Board may authorize and supervise additional committees, from time to time, to perform such functions as may be determined by the Board.

Article VIII: Honorary Diplomates

Honorary Diplomates are those individuals whose exceptionally high distinction and outstanding contributions to the advancement in the field of veterinary sports medicine and/or rehabilitation warrant special recognition by the College. Honorary Diplomates may be nominated from veterinary or allied professional fields. They shall not be required to pay dues, nor shall they have the privilege to vote or hold office or serve as a residency program director. Honorary Diplomates will be recognized according to their species focus when applicable.

- (a) **Nomination Procedure.** Nomination for Honorary Diplomate status shall be made through the sponsorship by at least two (2) members of the College in good standing. The sponsors shall furnish the College with at least two (2) letters of support outlining the candidate's qualifications and contributions to the field of veterinary sports medicine and/or rehabilitation. Submission of the nominee's current curriculum vitae is also required. The completed nomination packet should be submitted to the ACVSMR at secretary@acvsmr.org.
- (b) **Election Procedure.** The election of an Honorary Diplomate shall be accomplished first by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Board of Directors and subsequently, two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of those votes cast by eligible Diplomates.

Article IX: Exam Procedures

Section 1: Board-Certification Examinations

The Examination Committee, overseen by the Board, shall create valid and defensible examination content to assess each candidate's knowledge of sports medicine and rehabilitation. The examinations will be written under the guidelines of the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME).

There will be two (2) sequential examinations required for board certification. The first, the core knowledge examination, will be taken by all candidates and will contain questions on basic and clinical science issues in physiological, exercise science, medical, surgical and rehabilitation topics. The second examination will be more in-depth covering species-specific (canine or equine) sports medicine and rehabilitation issues with candidates taking either the canine examination or the equine examination. Candidates must pass both the core knowledge examination and one (1) of the species-specific examinations to earn diplomate status.

Section 2: Examination Procedures

The examination questions will be submitted by examination committee members in multiple-choice, fill in the blank/short answer, and short essay formats and written under the guidelines of the NBME. An examination rubric that includes the topics and their percentage distribution within the core knowledge and canine and equine species-specific examinations will be made available to all applicants in an effort to help guide their studies.

Section 3: Examination Content

Each of the three (3) examination sections will consist of 200 points distributed over the essential knowledge base expected of a diplomate. The core section will be comprised of multiple-choice questions. The species-specific section will have two portions or subsections:

- (a) A multiple-choice subsection and case scenario subsection comprised of a combination of multiple-choice, fill in the blank and short answer questions. The examinations will be computer-based and will be administered remotely by a professional testing service. The examinations will be given once a year. The examinations will be administered and monitored by the Examination Committee. Multiple choice test questions will be marked electronically and fill in the blank/short answer and short essay format questions will be marked by examination committee members blinded to candidate identity.
- (b) Candidates will receive an outline of topics and their respective percentage of importance in each examination and the format to be used prior to the examination. The outline of examination topics will be reevaluated every ten (10) years based on the results of a College-wide job analysis survey completed by the active diplomates under the auspices of the Board.

Section 4: Determination of the Examination Pass Rate

Prior to the examination, all candidates will be informed via e-mail of the method of determining the pass rate for the examinations within the examination application instructions. A set percentage pass rate for the examination will not be determined. A modified-Angoff procedure will be applied to the pool of examination questions to determine the initial passing score for the examinations. Each individual examination question will be reviewed and considered in light of how many of a group of 100 hypothetical "minimally competent diplomates" are likely to answer that question correctly. Additionally, a 95% confidence interval will be calculated using the standard error of the ratings and the inter-rater repeatability of the examination question evaluators.

After the examinations, the examination administrator will blind all candidate names to prevent any potential selection bias from the Examination Committee. The score distribution of the blinded examinees will be reviewed, and a passing point will be selected from within the previously defined 95% confidence interval. Once the initial criterion-referenced passing point is set, the standard will be maintained through statistical equating. A candidate's pass/fail performance will be established independently of the group who sat for the examination.

Candidates are judged by comparing their performance to an absolute standard and not to other candidates. Theoretically, all candidates can pass or all can fail. The cut-point may be adjusted downward based on natural breaks within the exam results, but not increased after administration of the examination. The determination of pass rates for each year's examinations will be the responsibility of the Examination Committee with the assistance of a professional testing agency. The pass rates for each of the three (3) examinations will be reviewed and approved by the Board.

If the Board does not approve of the pass rates or cut-points sent forward for review, then the Examination Committee will be asked to do a final review based on the Board of Director's concerns. The Examination Committee will review the Board concerns and either resubmit the original examination results or modify the results, as deemed appropriate by the Examination Committee. The Examination Committee will make the final decision on the pass rate and cut-point in collaboration with a professional testing service. The Board will have no veto powers over the final pass rate or established cut-point of the examinations.

Section 5: Notification of Examination Results

Examinees will receive notification of the results (i.e., pass, fail) of their examination within forty-five (45) days of the examination. Regardless of notification method, examinees will be notified of their results prior to informing the general membership. An examinee has thirty (30) days from the time of examination results notification to file a request for reconsideration or appeal the examination results (see Article XI: Grievance and Appeal Procedures). On failing to pass one or both required examinations, examinees will be informed of their remaining eligibility and the re-examination procedures. The candidates, on written request, will be provided with an explanation of deficiencies that prevented their passing the examination.

The Examination Committee will assist candidates who have failed the board-certification examination to identify areas in which they performed poorly in an effort to help guide their studies for subsequent re-examination.

Section 6: Re-examination Procedures

Candidates must pass all sections of the examination: core and each species-specific subsection of the examination within five (5) years of credential acceptance. Candidates will have three (3) attempts within five (5) years of credential acceptance to pass both the core knowledge and each species-specific subsection of the examination. Candidates failing to pass all of the board-certification examination must provide a formal letter to inform the Examination Committee of their intent for re-examination. If one section or species-specific subsection of the examination is not successfully completed, then only that section or species-specific subsection will need to be retaken at the next offering of the board- certification examinations. If a candidate has not successfully passed all sections of the examination within five (5) years after acceptance of their credentials, then they must resubmit their credentials, in accordance with their original credentials criteria to include a manuscript that is not older than 5 years at the time of credentials submission, for a second review and approval by the Credentialing Committee. If accepted, the candidate must retake all portions of the examination and will have another three (3) attempts within five (5) years to pass the examination. If a candidate still has not successfully passed all portions of the examination, to be further considered, they must complete a new residency training program.

Fees will be required for all re-examinations. Full examination fees will be required to retake both core and species-specific section/subsections of the examinations and one-half of the

examination fees will be required to retake one section (core or species-specific), or one species-specific subsection of the examination.

Section 7: Accommodation for Disabilities

The College will accommodate requests from applicants with documented disabilities for special test considerations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

For candidates requesting accommodation, a request form must be submitted to the ACVSMR Secretary with their examination registration of the year prior to the examination. Instructions for required documentation are included within the request form.

Article: X. Diplomas and Maintenance of Certification

Section 1: Certificates Attesting to Diplomate Status

On passing all sections of the examination, the candidate will receive a certificate of diplomate status indicating that the individual is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation and is certified in the AVMA-recognized specialty of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation (Canine) or Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation (Equine). The certificate of diplomate status is time-stamped and valid for 10 years following issuance.

Section 2: Maintenance of Certification

The criteria for American Veterinary Medical Association recognition of veterinary specialty organizations include having a mandatory program for maintenance of certification. Per the American Board of Veterinary Specialties (ABVS) policies, each specialty organization will develop its own standards and protocol for maintenance of certification.

For the College, diplomate status will be subject to a maintenance of certification process determined by the Board. All active diplomates will be required to act to maintain board certification every ten (10) years from the date of their initial certification. An active diplomate must apply to maintain board certification within three (3) years of eligibility (i.e., at years 8, 9 or 10 after obtaining diplomate status or the last maintenance of certification) via one of the following two (2) methods:

- (a) Accumulate five hundred (500) credits as outlined in the ACVSMR Maintenance of Certification Guidelines
- (b) Successfully pass both the core knowledge and species-specific board-certification examinations in their practice category

A diplomate who fails to successfully apply for maintenance of certification within the allotted three (3) years of eligibility or does not submit an application for maintenance of certification by the 10-year deadline will have their active diplomate status revoked and they will be placed on inactive diplomate status. If this occurs, active diplomate status can only be reinstated in one of the following ways:

- (a) If within one year of credentials expiration, diplomate status can be reinstated by acceptance of six hundred (600) recertification points.
- (b) By submission of a letter requesting re-examination for board certification which includes an explanation for the lapse of credentialing which details the candidate's involvement in the field of veterinary sports medicine and rehabilitation. Additionally, the candidate must

submit (2) letters of support from other ACVSMR diplomates. The candidate will be required to take the next available board certification examination and to pass both portions (i.e., core knowledge and species-specific) of the board certification examination.

If successful, the diplomate's board certification will extend 10 years from the date from which they successfully pass the American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation board certification examination.

An inactive diplomate will be required to remove the diplomate title from all marketing and business materials and can no longer claim board certification by this College. The diplomate title must be removed even if a person is planning to re-enter the examination process as a candidate. Once the ACVSMR board certification examination has been successfully passed and active diplomate status has been restored, the diplomate title can be returned to all marketing and business materials.

For a complete description of the current Maintenance of Certification requirements and guidelines see the ACVSMR Maintenance of Certification Guidelines.

Article XI: Grievance and Appeal Procedures

Section 1: Definitions

- (a) Grievances are defined as personal, professional, or criminal complaints filed against candidate, resident, diplomate, or administrative personnel associated with the College.
- (b) Appeals are defined as a disagreement by a resident, candidate or diplomate directed toward a decision provided by the College, Board, or committee chairs.
- (c) Appeals are reviewed independently by an ad hoc committee, that is unbiased and impartial.
- (d) Reconsiderations or reviews are defined as requests initiated by a candidate directed toward credentialing or examination decisions for which there are concerns regarding errors in administration, grading, or associated content. Unlike appeals, reconsiderations are reviewed by the original decision-maker at the time that the decision was communicated to the candidate.

Section 2: Grievances

The Board shall consider and act upon complaints or charges filed against candidates, residents, or diplomates for alleged violations of the Bylaws of the College or charges of unprofessional conduct and shall have the authority to take disciplinary actions, including reprimand, censure, suspension, or expulsion for grievous offenses.

- (a) **General Philosophy.** The College acknowledges that complaints filed against a candidate, resident, or diplomate is generally related to holding people accountable. The College is committed to ensuring that all complaints are dealt with in a responsive, efficient, effective, fair, and economical manner.
- (b) **Due Process.** The College desires to ensure an accurate and consistent response is provided for every grievance directed toward the College and its members and to ensure that substantive and procedural due process are provided in all instances.
- (c) **Jurisdiction.** Because the College is not a regulatory organization, the jurisdiction of the Board is limited to grievances regarding membership application; determinations by candidates for membership with respect to credentials and examinations; residency

program registration application determinations by residency Program Directors; diplomates.

Administrative requests or matters that are not covered by the Bylaws of the College or do not raise to the level of an appeal subject to this policy may be handled as appropriate at the discretion of the President of the College.

Complaints, questions, inquiries, or other matters related to infractions or alleged violations of individual State Practice Laws or the ethical codes of organized veterinary medicine such as the AVMA are not within the jurisdiction of the College and will be referred to the appropriate regulatory agency. However, action taken by state authorities or other veterinary medicine organizations may form the basis for disciplinary actions under this policy.

- (d) **Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest.** All matters that are the subject of appeals and grievance proceedings are to be kept confidential to the extent practical or otherwise required by law; however, information concerning disciplinary actions taken will be published in accordance with this policy. In addition, no one who has any personal involvement or conflicts of interest with respect to any matters that are the subject of the grievance shall be permitted to participate in the matter to be reviewed.

Section 3: Procedures for Filing Grievances

- (a) **Submission.** Any complaint, inquiry, or grievance about a resident, candidate or diplomate of the College initiated by the general public, clients, another ACVSMR diplomate, or Board must be addressed to the President of the College and be submitted in writing to the Secretary (Secretary@vsmr.org). The policies and procedures for filing grievances will be linked to the College website (vsmr.org) for transparency and ease of access.
- (b) **Dating and Recording.** The College administration will record the date of receipt of every complaint, inquiry, or grievance, file the original version, and assure a copy has been forwarded to the President of the College. Information needed for review of a grievance will be collated by the Secretary and distributed as directed by the President of the College.
- (c) **Conflict Resolution.** Internal conflict resolution should be attempted as a first step in this process. A benchmark of seriousness or formality may have to be set and reached before an Ad-hoc Grievances Committee is activated.

The following procedures will be followed for the specific person or situation involved:

- (i.) **Resident** – A complaint made to the College about a resident will be routed through the Credentialing and Residency Committee. The complaint will first be addressed to the Program Director for attempted resolution. If the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of both parties within 30 (thirty) days of the complaint, the Program Director shall notify the Credentialing and Residency Committee co- chairs who will notify the President of the College. The President will then form the Ad-hoc Grievances Committee. The committee will have 60 (sixty) days to address and resolve the complaint.
- (ii.) **Diplomate** – A complaint made to the College about a diplomate will be, via the President of the College, immediately addressed to the President-Elect and an Ad-hoc Grievances Committee formed. The Ad-hoc Grievances Committee will then have 60 (sixty) days to resolve the complaint and inform both parties.

Any internal problem revealed by a complaint will be communicated to the area of the College responsible for possible systemic improvement and the President of the College will have responsibility for following this issue to appropriate resolution.

Section 4: Policy for Grievances

- (a) **Grievances.** Types of complaints or grievances to be addressed by the College may be related to one or more of the following issues:
- (i.) Conviction of a felony or crime under state or federal law in a matter related to the practice of veterinary medicine
 - (ii.) Negligence, malpractice, or willful misconduct in the performance of professional services as determined by a state licensing body
 - (iii.) Violation of the Bylaws of the College, or fraud or misrepresentation in the application or maintenance of ACVSMR membership, residency training, professional certification, or other professional recognition or credential.

Additional complaints or grievances may be addressed on an individual basis, (pending any action from the relevant State Board of Veterinary Medicine) which include:

- (i.) A record of a client's dissatisfaction with service provided by an ACVSMR resident or diplomate
 - (ii.) A complaint about case management of a patient from a referring veterinarian that was provided by an ACVSMR resident or diplomate
 - (iii.) A complaint about the personal or professional behavior of an ACVSMR resident or diplomate.
- (b) **Extent of these Procedures.** Actions taken under this policy do not constitute enforcement of the law, although referral to appropriate government agencies may be made about a diplomate's conduct in certain situations. Individuals bringing complaints, inquiries, or grievances are not entitled to any relief or damages by virtue of this process although they will receive notice of the action taken.
- (c) **Grievance Format.** Although the initial grievance may be verbal, consideration can only be given to complaints, inquiries, or grievances submitted in writing. Correspondence from a diplomate or other injured party who has submitted a grievance, or a self-initiated grievance by the President of the College, must include all of the following:
- (i.) The identity of the individual submitting the grievance or the source of the grievance
 - (ii.) The identity of the diplomate or resident who is the subject of the complaint
 - (iii.) Specific factual information concerning the incident initiating the grievance with appropriate documentation
 - (iv.) The action requested.

All information concerning a grievance should be addressed to the President of the College and submitted to the Secretary (Secretary@vsmr.org). The President of the College will establish an Ad-hoc Grievances Committee, as necessary, to address complaints, grievances and ethical concerns and then provide recommendations and a final report to the President of the College for Board review and final decision. The

President of the College will provide a report of the final decision to the appropriate parties for each grievance.

- (d) **Method of Evaluation.** The President of the College is responsible for initial handling and disposition of any complaint, inquiry, or grievance in accordance with this policy.
- (i.) If the grievance involves federal, state, or local laws, regulations, or licensure, the President will inform the complainant of the limited scope of the ACVSMR policy on grievances and recommend the complainant pursue the matter through the appropriate regulatory agency. The President of the College may choose to specify which agency to contact if such is known.
 - (ii.) If the grievance is governed by this policy, the President of the College will direct that all material pertinent to the grievance evaluation be distributed to the Ad hoc Grievances Committee members.
 - (iii.) The complainant may be requested to provide additional information by the Chair of the Ad hoc Grievances Committee during its investigation. The Chair of the Ad hoc Grievances Committee may contact any other individuals who have knowledge of the facts and circumstances surrounding the complaint.
 - (iv.) The Ad hoc Grievances Committee will decide if the grounds for complaint are appropriate and of a significant nature and will evaluate each party's account of the course of events in order to determine a balanced account of the incident(s) associated with the grievance. The Ad hoc Grievances Committee will decide whether the submission constitutes a potentially actionable complaint. If the complaint is deemed inappropriate, the Chair of the Ad hoc Grievances Committee will inform the President of the College that no action should be taken.
 - (v.) In the case of a potentially actionable complaint, the Ad hoc Grievances Committee shall provide written notice of the complaint and pending investigation, along with a copy of the College Grievances policy to the complaine (resident or diplomate). The committee will also provide the complaine with a summary of the subject of the grievance and request any information refuting the grievance.
 - (vi.) The Ad hoc Grievances Committee will compile all information, evidence, and documentation relevant to the grievance and submit it to the Board with a summary of the Ad hoc Grievances Committee's review and recommendation for action. The grievance will be reviewed by the Board at their next regularly scheduled meeting or by conference call at an earlier date if such urgency is warranted.

Section 5: Ad hoc Grievances Committee

- (a) **Composition.** The Ad hoc Grievances Committee will consist of three (3) active diplomates that are in good standing with the College. An appointed member to the Ad hoc Grievances Committee may not be a member of the Board or a member of the committee that made the decision leading to the grievance. If an appointed committee member should have a conflict of interest, then the President of the College will appoint a replacement.
- (b) **Appointment.** The President of the College will appoint an Ad hoc Grievances Committee according to these Policies and Procedures when there is a grievance unrelated to a credentials decision or an examination decision.

- (c) **Terms of Office.** The Ad hoc Grievances Committee shall serve only for the duration of the current related process.
- (d) **General Authority and Duties.** The Chair of the Ad hoc Grievances Committee will call a meeting to review the grievance within forty-five (45) days of notification of the grievance. The Chair of the Ad hoc Grievances Committee will notify the Board of the results of the review and any associated recommendations. The final decision will be delivered electronically to the affected person(s) not more than fourteen (14) days after it has been made. The recipient will be asked to confirm receipt of the final decision; otherwise, a copy of the decision will be resent electronically or sent by official correspondence.
- (e) **Ad hoc Grievances Activities and Responsibilities.** Ad hoc grievances activities and responsibilities include the following:
 - (i.) Examine all documentation of candidates who have filed a grievance
 - (ii.) Determine if there is a basis for grievance and make a decision relative to the grievance
 - (iii.) Forward the committee's recommendation to the Board.

Section 6: Review by the Ad hoc Grievances Committee

- (a) **Meetings of the Ad-hoc Grievances Committee.** The Board is responsible for all final determinations, except with respect to grievances that may be appealed. The Chair of the Ad-hoc Grievances Committee is responsible for calling and chairing all meetings necessary or appropriate to implement the purposes of this policy. Telephone or video conferences will be arranged when appropriate to affect the purposes of this policy. Further conferences will be arranged when appropriate at the direction of the Chair of the Ad-hoc Grievances Committee.

All members of the Ad-hoc Grievances Committee members must participate in every meeting or conference and determinations are made by majority vote, except as otherwise prescribed. The affected parties may be invited to appear before the Ad-hoc Grievances Committee or Board at an appropriate point in the course of the proceeding, but there is no automatic right to an appearance.

Any additional information required by the Ad hoc Grievances Committee with respect to the complaint must be submitted within a time period established by the Chair of the Ad hoc Grievances Committee, but which shall not be less than thirty (30) days. The complainant may be asked for additional information, if any, by the members of the Ad hoc Grievances Committee. The Ad hoc Grievances Committee at its discretion also may contact any other individuals who have knowledge of the facts and circumstances surrounding the complaint.

To respond effectively, the Chair of the Ad hoc Grievances Committee shall direct that a detailed summary of the information, evidence, and documentation comprising the grievance be delivered to the individual who is the subject of the grievance (complainee). The complainee will be given the opportunity to provide additional information and to respond directly to the allegations by written submission to the Chair of the Ad hoc Grievances Committee.

The diplomate or resident that is the subject of the grievance may also request to appear

before the Ad hoc Grievances Committee. However, such appearance is at the sole discretion of the Chair of the Ad hoc Grievances Committee in consultation with the President of the College. During any such appearance, the diplomate will represent themselves and may be accompanied by no more than two advisers. There will be no trial-type hearing, presentation of evidence, witnesses, or cross-examination.

Any of the following sanctions may be recommended by the Ad hoc Grievances Committee to the Board for final vote and action:

- (i.) Written reprimand to or censure of the diplomate or resident
- (ii.) Suspension of the diplomate or resident for a designated period
- (iii.) Expulsion of the diplomate or resident from ACVSMR.

The written decision of the Ad-hoc Grievances Committee will be drafted for review and approval by the Board. The letter of notification will be postmarked to the complainant and the complainee within sixty (60) days of receipt of the grievance and no later than thirty (30) days from the date a determination is made.

After final determination by the Ad hoc Grievances Committee, a summary of the determination and the sanction, with the complainee's name, may be published by the Board at its discretion and will be maintained by the College administration as a public record.

Section 7: Outcome of Grievance Procedures

Complainants will be advised of outcomes as soon as possible after a decision is made and will be given reasons for decisions.

Complainees may be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to reprimand, censure, suspension, or expulsion from the College in the following circumstances by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Board present at a meeting or participating in a conference call at which a quorum is present.

Mediation is not available for grievances; however, an appeal of the Ad-hoc Grievances Committee or the Board's determination of disciplinary action may be made to the American Board of Veterinary Specialties (ABVS) by the diplomate who is the subject of such action.

The President of the College will notify the complainee (resident or diplomate) by official correspondence within thirty (30) days following the determination of the Board. The reasons for the Board's determination will be stated, and the complainee will be informed that the Board's determination is final.

Section 8: Formal Appeal Procedures in Case of an Adverse Decision

In case of an adverse decision by the College relative to denial of credentials or following the board-certification examination, an appeals process has been established utilizing an *Ad hoc* Appeals Committee appointed by the Board.

Adverse decisions by the College may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Denial of approval of a residency training application
- (b) Denial of adequacy of credentials

- (c) Denial of examination for board certification of an individual
- (d) Removal from the list of active diplomates.

In the event of adverse decisions, the College shall advise the affected person(s) of the procedure for appealing the adverse decision. An affected party desiring to appeal the College's adverse decision must adhere to the procedures detailed below.

Section 9: Grounds for Reconsideration

The affected party may petition for reconsideration of the College's decision on the grounds that the College had ruled erroneously by:

- (a) Failing to consider relevant evidence or documentation presented
- (b) Disregarding the established College criteria for achieving board certification
- (c) Failing to follow procedures as stated in any related guidelines or other document.

A request for reconsideration relating to the candidate's credentials or examination results must be filed within thirty (30) days of the date on which the adverse decision was announced to the candidate. The candidate may request reconsideration when there exist concerns regarding errors in administration, grading, or associated content. Reconsiderations are usually reviewed by the original decision-maker at the time that the decision was communicated to the candidate.

An appeal relating to the candidate's credentials or examination results may be pursued if the candidate's concerns remain unresolved after reconsideration and must be filed within thirty (30) days of the date on which the adverse decision was announced to the candidate. In the event of an adverse decision by the College relative to credentials or examination results, the College shall advise the affected person, and or the administrative official of the affected residency training, of the procedures for appealing the adverse decision. The appeal will be reviewed by an Ad hoc Appeals Committee, and their recommendation forwarded to the Board.

Section 10: Ad hoc Appeals Committee for Review of Credentials or Examination Appeals

- (a) **Composition.** The Ad hoc Appeals Committee will consist of three (3) active diplomates that are in good standing with the College. An appointed member to the Ad hoc Appeals Committee may not be a member of the Board or a member of the committee that made the decision leading to the appeal. If an appointed committee member should have a conflict of interest, then the President of the College will appoint a replacement.
- (b) **Appointment.** The President of the College or Delegate will appoint an Ad hoc Appeals Committee according to these Policies and Procedures when there is an appeal related to a credentials decision or an examination decision.
- (c) **Terms of Office.** The Ad hoc Appeals Committee shall serve only for the duration of the current related appeals process.
- (d) **General Authority and Duties.** The Chair of the Ad hoc Appeals Committee will call a meeting to review an appeal and consider whether due process has been followed within forty- five (45) days of notification of the appeal. The Chair will notify the Board of the results of the review. The final decision will be delivered electronically and by official correspondence to the affected person(s) not more than fifteen (15) days after it has been made. The recipient will be asked to confirm receipt of the final decision by contacting the Secretary (secretary@vsmr.org).

- (e) **Ad hoc Appeals Activities and Responsibilities.** Ad hoc appeals activities and responsibilities include the following:
- (i.) Examine all documentation of candidates who have appealed either a credentials decision or an examination decision
 - (ii.) Determine if there is a basis for appeal and make a decision relative to the appeal
 - (iii.) Forward the committee's recommendation to the Board.

Members of the Credentialing and Residency Committees will be recused from serving on the Ad hoc Appeals Committee when the appeal is related to credentialing or recertification. For credentialing appeals, the candidate, and the Program Director of the residency training program, if applicable, will be informed of the decision at least forty-five (45) days prior to the examination date.

An appeal relating to the candidate's examination outcome must be filed within thirty (30) days of the date on which the adverse decision was announced to the candidate. An appeal relating to the examination will be evaluated by an Ad hoc Appeals Committee, and their recommendation will be forwarded to the Board for review and approval. The candidate will be informed of the decision made within sixty (60) days after receipt of the appeal.

Members of the Examination Committee will be recused from serving on the Ad hoc Appeals Committee when the appeal is related to the board certification examination procedure or outcome.

Section 11: Appeals Process

The following four (4) steps outline the process that will be followed when an affected party challenges an adverse decision by the College relative to denial of credentials or following the examination:

- (a) An affected party may, at his or her option, file a written appeal with the College which shall include a statement of grounds for the grievance and documentation, if any, in support of the appeal. An appeal may be filed with or without a request for reconsideration.
- (b) An appeal must be received by the Secretary (secretary@vsmr.org) within thirty (30) days of the date on which the College announced its adverse decision.
- (c) The Board will appoint an Ad hoc Appeals Committee to review appeals, consisting of three (3) diplomates. The Ad hoc Appeals Committee will elect a Chair. An appointed member to the Ad hoc Appeals Committee may not be a member of the Board. If an appointed committee member should have a conflict of interest, then the President will appoint a replacement. Appointed members may not be members of the initial committee that made the decision leading to the current appeal.
- (d) The Chair of the Ad hoc Appeals Committee will call a meeting to review an appeal and consider whether due process has been followed within forty-five (45) days of notification of the appeal. The Chair will notify the Board of the results of the review and the final decision will be sent electronically and by certified mail to the affected person(s) not more than fifteen (15) days after the decision has been made.

The affected person(s) will confirm receipt of the decision by contacting the Secretary.

- (e) Upon the completion of Steps 1 through 4 above, if the affected party is not satisfied with the final decision, they may request assistance with mediation through the American Board of Veterinary Specialties (ABVS).

Section 12: Resignation

If a diplomate or resident subject of a grievance voluntarily surrenders his or her membership at any time during a pending complaint, the complaint will be dismissed without any further action and the record will be sealed.

The President of the College will communicate the resignation of the diplomate or resident to the College membership in the same manner that resignations from membership are published or communicated.

The complainant will be notified of the date of resignation of the diplomate or resident and of the dismissal of the complaint by the Board.

Section 13: Destruction of Materials

Because of the confidentiality of all matters related to a grievance, each member of the Executive Committee, Board, and Appeals Panel will permanently delete all electronic files and return any written materials to the College office. Materials returned to the ACVSMR office will be accounted for and maintained as appropriate. Complaints and their outcome will be recorded in hard copy and information will be kept by the College office for 3 years beyond resolution and then will be permanently destroyed.

Section 14: Reporting

- (a) **Confidentiality.** All appeals and grievances will remain confidential to the level of necessary exposure as provided in this policy. The recording of appeals and grievances in the Board of Director minutes will reflect the nature of the problem, appropriate discussion, and recommended action. Any individuals participating in an appeal or grievance may be asked to sign a confidentiality statement.
- (b) **Acknowledging grievances and appeals within the College.** Only involved parties will be privileged to the identification of the complainant and the complaine, other than any identification published in a final determination made in accordance with this policy. Diplomates may be made aware of the number and general scope of appeals and grievances reviewed by the Board; however, the reporting will not include the identity of any individual(s) involved or any details of individual cases.

Section 15: Fiscal

Office expenses for the production and distribution of material pertaining to the review will be borne by the budget of the ACVSMR. The College will provide travel and per diem expense funds commensurate with prevailing allocations for committee travel and per diem expenses for ACVSMR representatives to any mediation hearing.